

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4787

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 06239

E.O.11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PINT, SP  
SUBJECT: AP LEADER SILVA ON MILITARY, POLITICAL TOPICS

1. SUMMARY. AT LUNCH MAY 30 WITH THE  
CHARGE AP LEADER FEDERICO SILVA MUNOZ GAVE NO INDICATION  
KEY MILITARY ARE ACTIVELY CONCERNED ABOUT EITHER THE  
CURRENT PERFORMANCE OF THE SUAREZ GOVERNMENT OR THE RECENT  
RESIGNATION OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF VEGA. HE WAS CRITICAL  
OF WHAT HE CALLED THE CONTINUING IMMATURITY OF THE PSOE  
AND THE UCD/SUAREZ TACTIC OF PUSHING THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT  
LINE, BUT APPEARED TO TAKE SOME CONSOLATION FROM A RECENT  
POLL COMMISSIONED BY THE RIGHT SHOWING 55 PERCENT OF THE  
SPANISH PEOPLE IN THE CENTER AND RIGHT. END SUMMARY

2. SILVA, WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE GOOD CONTACTS AMONG THE  
SPANISH MILITARY, SAID THE SUAREZ GOVERNMENT WAS UNPOPULAR  
WITHIN THE MILITARY, BUT HE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT  
MILITARY CONCERNS WERE AT A SIGNIFICANT OR ACTIVE LEVEL.  
ONE SOURCE OF MILITARY HESITATION ABOUT SPAIN'S JOINING  
NATO, SAID SILVA, WAS THE SUSPICION THAT THE GOS INTENDED  
TO USE NATO MEMBERSHIP AS A POLITICAL TOOL, INTER ALIA TO  
REMOVE SOME OFFICERS AND SEND SOME SPANISH ARMY TROOPS  
OUT OF SPAIN. (COMMENT: GOS OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY  
MADE CLEAR TO US THAT THEY DO NOT THINK IN TERMS OF  
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STATIONING SPANISH TROOPS ABROAD IN PEACETIME AS PART  
OF THE NATO COMMITMENTS SPAIN COULD UNDERTAKE IN THE  
FORESEEABLE FUTURE. END COMMENT.)

3. REGARDING THE RECENT RESIGNATION OF ARMY CHIEF OF  
STAFF VEGA (MADRID 5636), SILVA ECHOED THE NOW-FAMILIAR  
ANALYSIS THAT IT WAS DUE TO AN ACCUMULATION OF DIFFERENCES

BETWEEN VEGA AND FIRST VICE PRESIDENT AND DEFENSE MINISTER GUTIERREZ MELLADO. THE RESIGNATION HAD LONG BEEN IN THE WORKS, ACCORDING TO SILVA, AND VEGA HAD INTIMATED AS MUCH TO HIM SOME TWO MONTHS BEFORE IT ACTUALLY OCCURRED. ONE FACTOR, SAID SILVA, WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION OF IMPOSING MANDATORY RETIREMENT RULES WHICH WOULD PUT A CEILING OF TWELVE YEARS ON THE AMOUNT OF TIME ONE COULD BE A GENERAL. VEGA WOULD HAVE REACHED THE CEILING THIS YEAR, ACCORDING TO SILVA. VEGA'S RESIGNATION CAUSED NO PARTICULAR UNREST WITHIN THE OFFICER CORPS, SINCE HE WAS SIMPLY NOT THAT POPULAR.

4. SILVA THOUGHT THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM COULD NOT BE HELD BEFORE THE END OF NOVEMBER, WITH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS TO FOLLOW. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT GENERAL ELECTIONS WOULD ALSO BE HELD AT THAT TIME WAS DELIBERATELY BEING KEPT FUZZY BY THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES, SAID SILVA, SO THEY COULD DECIDE ON THE BASIS OF HOW THE SITUATION LOOKED WHEN THE TIME CAME.

5. SILVA REJECTED THE RECURRING TALK OF A POSSIBLE UCD/PSOE COALITION, NOTING IT WOULD CAUSE SUBSTANTIAL UCD DEFECTIONS. HE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THE DIFFICULTY THE TWO PARTIES WOULD HAVE IN RESOLVING WHO WOULD REALLY BE IN CHARGE. SUAREZ WAS OBSESSED, HOWEVER, SAID SILVA, WITH PLAYING THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT CARD. THE PSOE  
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CONTINUED TO SHOW ITSELF IMMATURE AND EVEN PUERILE AND IRRATIONAL IN ITS DEFENSE VIEWS, ACCORDING TO SILVA, WHO THOUGHT IT WAS PROBABLY RECEIVING SOVIET FUNDING. SILVA ALSO THOUGHT THE BASQUE TERRORIST GROUP ETA WAS GETTING KGB SUPPORT.

6. SILVA SAID A RECENT POLL SHOWED 45 PERCENT OF THOSE QUESTIONED CONSIDERED THEMSELVES ON THE LEFT, BUT ONLY 16 PERCENT CALLED THEMSELVES MARXISTS. HE FOUND IT COMFORTING THAT 55 PERCENT OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE DEFINE THEMSELVES AS BELONGING TO THE CENTER OR THE RIGHT. EATON

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 02 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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